Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar.—Is he a Cochinite or an outsider?

Mr. T. Narayana Menon.—He is an outsider.

Mr. M. A. Chakko.—(6). May I know who that person is.

Mr. T. Narayana Menon.—The person referred to is Mr Chaterjee of Calcutta.

License fee for boats—extension of period for payment.

338. **Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.**—With reference to question No. 284 and the answer thereon during the last but one meeting of the council, will the Government be pleased to state:—

(a) whether the Chief Engineer in his Memo P. 38/08, dated 14th December 1932 (30th Vrischigam 1108), extended the period of paying the license fee of motor boats till the 15th Dhanu 1108;

(b) why in spite of the above mentioned order the Canal authorities at Kottappuram, hauled up boats on the 1st of Dhanu though the Ernakulam authorities were charitable enough to permit the line boats to leave that jetty on the same date;

(c) how this directly opposed actions of the two Superintendents on the same order of the Chief Engineer can be accounted for;

(d) why on the 2nd of Dhanu line boats were permitted to leave the Kottappuram jetty as usual and on the same day they were hauled up at Ernakulam;

(e) whether this alteration of refusals and permissions causing great inconvenience to the travelling public was taken note of by the Government and what they intend to do in the matter?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—(a) The Chief Engineer while sanctioning the request of the Boat Owners' Association of 27th Vrischigam 1108, ordered on 14th December 1932 (29th Vrischigam 1108), that the 1st instalment should be paid at once and the 2nd, by the 1st week of Dhanu 1108.

(b) and (c) This order did not reach the Canal Superintendent, in time and, therefore, he had to take measures to collect the fees.

(d) The words 'at once' which appeared in the Chief Engineer's order was interpreted to mean 'forthwith' by the Canal Superintendent, Ernakulam, whereas it was meant only to convey 'without delay'.

(e) No inconvenience was caused to any body as the Chief Engineer was in Ernakulam camp then. Necessary instructions were given immediately and matters remedied.

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Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Can a copy of the Chief Engineer's order be placed on the table?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—I will read it.

"A copy of the above letter with that of the enclosure is forwarded to the Assistant Engineer, Southern Division, who is requested to comply with the request. Those of the boat owners who have fully paid the inspection fee due up-to.date at the rate of Rs. 25 per half year may be allowed to pay the license fee in two instalments, the first at once and the second precisely in the first week of Kumbham 1108. A declaration should also be taken from the boat-owner concerned in respect of each of the several boats owned by them, agreeing to pay up the balance of the licence fee now due before the end of the first week of Kumbham 1108 without raising any protest or complaint on any account".

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—With reference to (b) and (c), may I know why this order did not reach the Canal Superintendent at Cranganur in time? What was the cause of the delay?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—All these happened within one or two days, *i. e.*, the date of collecting fee and the date of the order.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—In view of the fact that boats might be suspended from running, causing a great inconvenience to the travelling public, was it not considered advisable to the Government to treat it as an emergency and to give the authorities at Cranganur some such order in order to avoid this trouble by telegram or by any such useful way?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—The whole blame should be laid on the Boat Owners' Association itself. They put in their petition on the 11th moment, i. e., on the 27th of Vrischigam and the orders were passed on the 29th and the next day it was received. They should have put in their request well in time if they were particular about it and there were only 3 days. The Chief Engineer passed orders within two days.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—In how many days did the order reach Cranganur if it was passed in time?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—I think it took one or two days.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—In view of this fact could it not have been despatched in some extraordinary way so that it might be received on the very same day to avoid this trouble to the travelling public?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—The duty to avoid such a contingency was on the boat owners themselves.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—When once you have granted a favour, was it not left to the Government to see that the people are benefited by it?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—The people were benefited. The mistake was with the boat owners.

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Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Generally does not this word "at once" mean forthwith?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—Generally it is so. It could be interpreted in another manner also. It depends upon the discretion of the officer. If you look into the Dictionary you will see the meaning "without losing time". But it is not possible in exective matters. And in an executive order like that a discretion is necessary.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Could he not have done it in a proper way so that there might not be any misunderstanding about it?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—He could have done it.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—The Chief Engineer was present at Ernakulam and there was no more trouble. Is his mere presence at Ernakulam a soothing balm for the troubles undergone by the people?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—The Chief Engineer was ready at hand to receive the complaint and pass orders.

Decree-debts due from Agriculturists.

339. **Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.**—Referring to the materials of the last as many years as possible, will the Government be pleased to state the number of the decreed debts, due from agriculturists that amounted to—

(a) ten times and more of the principal.

(b) 9; 8; 7; 6; 5; 4; 3; 2; and 1½ times of the principal;

(c) how far the above were productive loans;

(d) the reasons for (c);

(e) what the Government have been doing to combat the evils indicated above;

(f) what the Government intend to do in the matter?

Mr. U. Kandar Menon.—(a), (b), (c) and (d). It is not possible to give any definite information on these as it involves the searching of numberless case files which it is not possible to complete before the end of the present meeting.

(e) and (f). An Economic Survey of the State has been started with a view to ascertain the real situation of agriculturists. The question will be considered after the Survey is over.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Could you kindly get it before the next meeting?

Mr. U. Kandar Menon.—The Government have already addressed the Chief Court in the matter. They have not supplied the information. This information can be got only from the courts.

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